

An Opportunity to Teach

Meeting
Title II Teacher
Education
Reporting
Requirements

An
Executive
Summary



AN OPPORTUNITY TO TEACH

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American Association of State

Colleges and Universities

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LETTER FROM THE CHAIRPERSON

In October of 1998 the Higher Education Reauthorization Act mandated that all Title IV funded colleges with teacher preparation programs and states that approve such programs develop and publish an annual report on their teacher preparation programs. Like many legislative mandates it was easier said than done. Faced with a common problem, five national higher education associations and six state systems of higher education chose to cooperate with the mandate by providing technical assistance and advice on how to comply with the new requirement. The result was the creation of the Teacher Preparation Accountability and Evaluation Commission (TPAEC). Over 70 members of the higher education community actively participated in the work of the commission and another 200 actively monitored its work.

TPAEC did not play an advocacy role in the development of the *Reference and Reporting Guide* that was developed by the U.S. Department of Education to implement this legislation but TPAEC did actively cooperate with the government relations professionals at TPAEC's sponsoring associations. In retrospect it is clear that the substantive work done by TPAEC was influential in changing the way the Department of Education approached the report requirement. The how-to approach adopted by the department in their April 2000 Reference and Reporting Guide followed the example of early work done by TPAEC and represented a major change in their approach to regulating the development of the reports.

Early on, TPAEC adopted the policy of making sure that our recommendations would help states and institutions answer the questions that are asked by the legislation. You will find carefully thought through explanations and examples that will help you do just that. In addition, we have gone one step further. We have developed recommendations about additional supplemental information we think you should add to the required publication of your teacher preparation report. Our aim is to help clarify to the public how our programs respond to public need and how different institutions and states approach that objective. We think that if you merely publish the federal form and the answers for your state or institution that the public will be misled rather than informed and we urge all report publishers to carefully think through what additional information should be published. We have included many categories for



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you to consider and many suggestions on how to present the information. We think our recommendations in this area will be of particular help to you as you work to comply with this new information mandate. Treat this mandate as an opportunity to teach our publics about us.

We wish you well in this new task, we stand ready to answer questions and we hope our work will help develop public confidence in our teacher preparation programs.

Molly C. Broad
President, University of North Carolina
Chair, TPAEC Policy Council



INTRODUCTION

October of 1998 saw passage of the latest revisions to the federal Higher Education Act. Among the usual host of statutory modifications was a new reporting requirement for teacher preparation programs that are housed in institutions that receive Title IV funds and for states that approve those teacher preparation programs. This legislation called for the development of critical definitions and a uniform reporting process by the U.S. Department of Education. Washington based higher education associations had two areas of concern about this legislation. First, they wanted to influence the development of the rules by which the reports would be detailed and second, they wanted to help their member institutions comply with the reporting requirements. The Teacher Preparation Accountability and Evaluation Commission (TPAEC) was created to address the second set of concerns. The first set of concerns was assigned to the government relations offices of the sponsoring associations.

The schedule for reporting on teacher preparation programs that is now in effect is as follows:

- **October 7, 2000** States must report to the U.S. Department of Education on the status of its definitions and on its process for gathering institutional reports
- **April 7, 2001** Each teacher preparation program's institution must file its first annual report with the state
- **October 7, 2001** States must file their first annual report with the U.S. Department of Education
- **April 7, 2002** The U.S. Secretary of Education must file a report with Congress on the States' efforts to improve teacher quality (and institutions must file their second annual report with their state)

The exact form of the institution reports is not yet determined because states have been charged by the U.S. Department of Education to develop the data collection and calculation processes for those reports. States must also develop several high stakes definitions for use in the reports. Among



the most important of these definitions are: *'low performing institution,'* and *'alternative route program.'* Institutions must be consulted by the state on all these matters as well as the development of dispute resolution and appeal processes in the state. These are the matters about which the state must report to the Secretary of Education on October 7, 2000. That date is effectively the time by which the state and institutional consultations must be complete.

This manual is meant to be used in conjunction with the U.S. Department of Education's *Reference and Reporting Guide for Preparing State and Institutional Reports on the Quality of Teacher Preparation* (NCES 2000-089). That report can be purchased from the U.S. Government Printing Office or can be downloaded from the World Wide Web at www.ed.gov/offices/OPE/News/teacherprep/reportingguide.pdf. Page numbers in this manual refer to pages in the *Reference and Reporting Guide* and correspond to the portable document format (.pdf) version of that publication from the web and not the Microsoft Word version of the document.

TPAEC's companion technical assistance manual can be purchased from the AASCU publications office 202.293.7070 or can be downloaded from the World Wide Web at www.aascu.org/tpaec/tech-manual.pdf.

Thoughts to ponder

To States and Institutions

The reports should not be prepared with a defensive message. Remember that your public report should not be just the duplicated annual questionnaire that must be filed with the state and the Secretary of Education. Rather it should explain the whole range of teacher preparation programs offered, who is served, and the measures taken to ensure that quality teacher preparation is delivered. Teacher preparation is important and complex. Be candid about the complexity and difficulty of quality teacher preparation. Convey both themes in your public report. Be willing to acknowledge differences of opinion in the field about the best measures of quality.



States have not adopted the same philosophies of education and independent colleges and public colleges respond to different missions. Quality in teacher preparation is significantly affected by the state laws and regulations that govern teacher preparation programs and teacher licensure. Explain the impact of that philosophy and how your institution delivers on that philosophy.

Parents, students, legislators, governors, and the public at large will have access to your public report. Each is likely to read the report differently. Prepare your report to anticipate their different concerns and point of view. Finally, anticipate comparisons by the media and policy makers and try to minimize their effect. Fairly or unfairly, you can be assured that the media will rank your institutions from top to bottom in your state even though the official rankings are by quartile. If you have a reason to be compared to other peers, you must provide the media with that information when you publish your annual report. National media will undoubtedly rank and compare states even though the *Reference and Reporting Guide* declares that inappropriate. Build your response to such reporting in your published report.

To States

Please respect the individuality of higher education institutions and don't use the reports to try to homogenize teacher preparation programs in your state. One of the strengths of American higher education is that it is a market system of institutions that serves different populations for different purposes. This heterogeneity ensures that experimentation persists and that a wide segment of the population is served.

To Institutions

Take advantage of the opportunity to contextualize the data on your institution. Make clear your perspective in teacher education, your mission, and the population you serve. Evidence of effectiveness beyond test scores should be included in the contextual section. Verify data and calculations for your institution. Even given the best of intentions on the part of the state or the testing company, the calculation of pass rates is a very detailed and complex process. These factors make it likely that mistakes will occur—especially in the first critical years of reporting. If



you don't check the accuracy of what is included and calculated for your institution, you won't know if your institution is treated properly. In short, don't rely on others (the state or testing agencies) to have done the calculations correctly. Institutions will have to live with the public relations consequences of any mistakes. Don't expose your institution to adverse consequences that can be avoided.

The Sponsoring Associations

- American Association of State Colleges and Universities
- American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education
- Council of Independent Colleges
- National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities
- State Higher Education Executive Officers

The Contributing Higher Education Systems

- California State University
- Illinois Consortium: Illinois Board of Higher Education
- Illinois State Board of Education
- Illinois Community College Board
- Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning
- State University of New York
- University of North Carolina
- University System of Georgia

The Policy Council

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- Jon Fuller, Senior Fellow, National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities
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- Burnett Joiner, President, Livingstone College, North Carolina
- Thomas Layzell, Commissioner, Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning, Mississippi
- Nicholas Michelli, University Dean for Teacher Education, City University of New York
- James Mingle, Executive Director, State Higher Education Executive Officers
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INSTITUTIONAL REPORTS

The 1998 amendments to the Higher Education Act require institutions with teacher preparation programs to perform two tasks: complete an annual Institutional Questionnaire about their teacher education program that will be released to the public; and make public, through publications, data and information from the questionnaire.

TPAEC's companion technical assistance manual explains how to accomplish these tasks and makes recommendations about the content of the explanatory or contextual information that should accompany the publication of the institution's annual report.

Briefly, each institution must report:

- Institutional pass rates on teacher licensure examinations and how they compare to statewide averages.
- The number of students in teacher education programs.
- The faculty to student ratio in practice teaching.
- If the program is state approved.
- If the program has been designated as 'low performing.'

Model questionnaires in TPAEC's companion technical manual report will help state authorities and institutions with teacher preparation programs communicate what the public and policy makers should understand about these programs.

We strongly urge that any information gathering conducted on an institution's teacher preparation program be a college-wide activity completed in collaboration with that institution's research office, public relations office, and others. This report should be the result of a university-wide effort. It should not be assigned only to the teacher education unit. If the creation of the report is the responsibility of individuals outside of teacher education, we recommend that the teacher education unit must be actively involved and consulted.

Some new and important terms significantly affect the institutional reports. Pass rates will be the item of most immediate interest to the public and to policy makers. The *summary pass rate* most likely will dominate the



local headlines. Institutions will be held responsible for *program completers* even if they are not recommended by your program to the state for licensure and even if they do not graduate from your institution.

Institutional Questionnaire

Every institution with a teacher preparation program must complete an annual Institutional Questionnaire consisting of three sections:

From the Reference and Reporting Guide

Pass Rate

The percentage of program completers who passed assessment(s) taken for initial certification or licensure in the field of preparation.

- **Single Assessment Pass Rate:** The proportion of program completers who passed the assessment among all who took the assessment.
- **Aggregate Pass Rate:** The proportion of program completers who passed all the tests they took in each of six skill or knowledge areas, among all program completers who took one or more tests in each area.
- **Summary Pass Rate:** The proportion of program completers who passed all tests they took for their area of specialization among those who took one or more tests in their specialization areas.

Program Completer

A person who has met all the requirements of a state-approved teacher preparation program. Program completers include all those who are documented as having met such requirements. Documentation may take the form of a degree, institutional certificate, program credential, transcript, or other written proof of having met the program's requirements. In applying this definition, the fact that an individual has or has not been recommended to the state for initial certification or licensure may *not* be used as a criterion for determining who is a program completer.

- Pass Rates;
- Program Information; and
- Contextual Information

Recognizing that a single federal form will not represent the variety found in this nation's teacher preparation programs, TPAEC offers the following definitions which may be useful to help you individualize the mandated reporting data. These definitions classify institutions by when their state-required tests or assessments are administered.

■ **Gatekeeper Institution:** Some or all of the state-mandated tests are required prior to admission to a program or prior to a specified experience within a program (e.g., student teaching).

■ **Exit Institution:** All of the state-mandated tests are required for graduation or program completion or both.

■ **Licensure Institution:** All state-mandated tests are required for licensure/certification but not for graduation.



The companion technical manual provides examples of how these different kinds of institutions might customize the presentation of the required information to effectively explain their results. Also included are communication recommendations such as:

The completion of Tables C1 and C2 of the Institutional-Level Pass-Rate Data form is straightforward and offers no options for customizing the type of information that is submitted to the state. However, these same data must be reported to the public and the way in which that information is presented can have a major impact on what is communicated. For those institutions that have assigned individuals *other* than from the teacher-education unit to develop this public report, it is advisable to consult and involve that unit, so programmatic strengths will be highlighted. Several areas of possible concern follow.

- Be brief when describing these pass rates in the public report. Although the pass rates on state-required assessments seem to be efficient and simple measures of program accountability, they offer very limited information in terms of the entire program. At a minimum, these pass rates should be presented *following* a narrative description of the program.
- In some cases, data can hide features of the program that the institution wishes to highlight. For example, an institution that has targeted its program to the needs of a special student population may want to emphasize this fact. Since the data reported to the state are aggregated, this institution may benefit by disaggregating the data in its public report to show the successes of a particular population as compared to the performance of similar students at other institutions.

Contextual Information

This section of the Institutional Questionnaire provides additional information about teacher preparation programs. Contextual information is not required by Title II, but may provide critical information that describes the unique aspects of your teacher preparation program and should be attended to carefully. The companion technical manual addresses the following topics:



- Program or University Mission
- Characteristics of Student Population
- Program Characteristics
- Clinical Experiences
- Student Teaching Models
- Supervisor Selection, Training, and Evaluation
- Supervision Process
- Relationship of Student Teaching to Other Required Clinical Experiences
- Program and Student Teaching Admission Requirements
- Graduation or Program Completion Requirements.
- Recruitment and Retention
- Alternative Routes/Programs
- Faculty Credentials and Characteristics
- Regional and National Accrediting Information
- Disaggregating Data to Highlight Program Strengths
- Explanations of State Rankings
- Explanations of Updates of Pass Rates
- Explanations of Students Who Test Out-of-State
- Explanations of a Variety of Internship and Student Teaching Models

Meeting the Publication Requirement

Section 207(f)(2) of Title II of the Higher Education Act requires institutions to publish data submitted to the State on their teacher preparation programs and make it available to potential applicants, secondary school guidance counselors, and prospective employers of the institution's program graduates. It is not sufficient to merely submit the required information to the state on the annual Institutional Questionnaire. TPAEC recommends that institutions carefully consider what information should be published and the format of the report.



STATE REPORTS

TPAEC developed this section in consultation with representatives of state agencies and boards responsible for teacher credentialing. The technical assistance manual specifically addresses those sections of the amendments that require statewide accountability. The law directs each state to prepare a report on the quality of its teacher preparation programs and to undertake other required functions related to low-performing programs of teacher preparation within institutions of higher education. TPAEC's State Reports section offers advice on each section of the state report provided by the U.S. Department of Education. TPAEC's State Reports section provides guidance and additional contextual analysis to those responsible for producing the state report and undertaking the required related activities. Its purpose is to increase institutional and state awareness of the potential impact that the reporting mechanisms may have on these two groups.

The state report may appear to be a straightforward compilation of required criteria, standards, assessments, pass rates, and other types of information that reflect a state's teacher certification and licensure requirements. This federal mandate represents the first time Congress and the public at large will receive information on teacher preparation programs that inevitably will invite comparisons among states and between institutions.

The State Questionnaire

The State Questionnaire consists of seven sections which are treated in detail in the companion technical manual.

- Description of State Teacher Certification or Licensure Assessment and Other Requirements.
- Description of State Teacher Standards, and the Alignment Between State Teacher Certification or Licensure Requirements and Assessments and State Student Standards and Assessments.



- Pass Rates for Each of the Assessments Used by the State for Teacher Certification or Licensure.
- Information on Waivers of State Certification or Licensure Requirements.
- Alternate Routes to Teacher Certification or Licensure, and Pass Rates for Teachers with Alternative Certification.
- Description of Proposed Criteria for Assessing the Performance of Teacher Preparation Programs Within Institutions in the State.
- State Efforts to Improve Teacher Quality.

In brief, States must do the following:

- provide extensive descriptive information;
- calculate state pass rate averages;
- enable verification by institutions;
- establish an appeal process;
- rank institutions by quartiles;
- define:
 - low performing institutions;
 - at-risk institutions;
 - alternative routes;
 - traditional teacher education programs;
 - academic year;
 - test closure date;
- publish the above [except `at-risk institutions']; and
- report on waivers.

All of these items are addressed in TPAEC's companion technical assistance manual. Here are some examples.

Alternative Route to Certification or Licensure

This term must be defined by the state. How states define this term is one of the most critical decisions that they can make in terms of this report. States



must define and describe *precisely* what they mean when they use this term in their reports.

At-Risk Institution

This term must be defined by the state. The term “at-risk institution” shall mean “at-risk of becoming low performing”. Thus, first see the definition for “*Low-Performing Institution*” below. How states identify and apply the criteria for defining “at-risk” and “low-performing institutions” will be very important decisions. If states define at-risk and low performing in ways that create large numbers of such institutions, extensive political repercussions could result, especially in states already experiencing teacher shortages. If, on the other hand, few or no institutions are designated as low performing or at-risk, then the state may be perceived as having low standards.

Note: States are not required to publicly report “at-risk institutions”. However, these institutions should be informed that they need to make improvements, so they can work to avoid being designated as a “low-performing institution” in the future. Be aware that individuals who use Freedom of Information laws and “Sunshine” laws may generate requests for data on at-risk institutions, even if the states do not report these institutions.

Some Considerations

The 50 states have significant differences in their governance structures for teacher certification and in their ways of assessing the readiness of potential teachers. Although the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) has consulted widely with interested parties throughout the country in developing definitions and reporting methods, it is very likely that individual states may find the resulting definitions insufficient. TPAEC encourages states to take advantage of every opportunity to provide state-specific contextual information, to clarify definitions, and to add information when those provided prove to inadequately reflect a state’s procedures and requirements. The importance of providing information in a



way that accurately captures the nuances and distinctiveness of each state's requirements and programs cannot be stressed too emphatically.

The state agency responsible for teacher education certification and licensure is the agency that will ultimately complete the state report on teacher preparation. The authority of these bodies vary among the states and may be separate from higher education institutions and agencies. Given the potential for definitions that do not accurately capture the unique features in a given state, TPAEC *strongly recommends* that states give responsibility for completing the report to personnel who are well-versed in the nuances of terminology and who are cognizant of the potential uses of the data that are being provided.

The state report is broad in scope and has the potential to significantly impact higher education institutions. Consequently, TPAEC strongly supports the involvement of a number of stakeholders from higher education, secondary and elementary education who are familiar with teacher preparation activities in the state in developing and completing the state document. Representatives from higher education and other related state agencies should review the report before its release.

States must develop an appeals process for challenges that will surely come, given the high visibility and high stakes associated with the Title II Report. States should think carefully about which agencies should be involved in the appeals process and establish those agreements at the outset of this project.

Finally, the involvement and collaboration of elementary, secondary and community college professionals on the report should extend well beyond the completion of the state report. It will likely stimulate joint discussions about the publication of information regarding the quality of teacher preparation programs in the state and how to generate public support for standards-based teacher preparation. One hopes, however, that it will also stimulate collaborative development of public policies that will improve the quality of teachers in the states.



Contextual Information

Contextual information may provide critical additional data and narrative information that describes the unique aspects of a state's teacher preparation programs. Every opportunity should be taken to demonstrate the state's efforts to improve the quality of teacher preparation. This reporting procedure is confined to initial licensure of prospective teachers and is not concerned with additional licenses or a change in the status from initial to advanced licensure.

This section helps illustrate aspects of programs that are not necessarily explained by numerical calculations (e.g., student-to-faculty ratios in the supervision of student teachers that vary based on models such as traditional student teaching, internships, and professional development schools). Information in this section may be used to describe characteristics of the student population (e.g., changing demographics, socioeconomic status, English as a Second Language students) which may impact the data.

Linking Information to the Secretary of Education's Report to Congress

The companion technical assistance manual offers the following observations and advice about how the Secretary of Education may use data from the institution and State annual questionnaires.

States and institutions alike should keep in mind that the Secretary of Education is statutorily required to include a comparison of states' efforts to improve teaching quality. This requirement is noteworthy because TPAEC deliberations have underlined the importance of trying to describe, explain, and report on efforts to improve teacher preparation programs in more than a purely quantitative fashion. TPAEC acknowledges the importance of quantitative reports and values such data. At the same time, TPAEC recognizes the manifest limitation of quantitative data and its ability to be misused, misunderstood, and abused by subsequent interpreters.



TPAEC has concerns regarding the approach, methods, or consequences of the legislation that requires these annual reports. However, it is clear that Congress initiated these report-card requirements out of a deep and abiding concern about students' performance in school. This issue should guide states when they are selecting supplemental information to include in their annual reports. The types of questions that states should ask follow.

- How are teacher graduates performing once they are in the field?
- Are school employers satisfied with teacher graduates?
- Are teacher graduates improving their students' scores on tests?
- Has the state supported or encouraged teacher preparation program initiatives that improve the answers to the above questions?



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